



(U) A Lesson in Sharing at the FBI (part 1)

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(U//FOUO) SID today asked IA interns who have done tours at other Intelligence Community agencies to tell us what they've learned. [REDACTED], currently doing a tour at the FBI, provided the following observations...

(U//FOUO) My tour with the FBI has been split into two very different assignments. I spent the first three months with Customer Account Management (S112) as a representative to the FBI's Washington Field Office (WFO). During the second half of my tour I have been a forward-deployed SIGDEV analyst from the Counterterrorism product line, detailed to the Communications Analysis Unit (CAU) at FBI headquarters. Each of these positions has allowed me to gain a big-picture understanding of the link (and, since 9/11, sometimes the blurry line) between foreign intelligence and domestic law enforcement. I was also able to experience first-hand the successes brought about by this relationship as well as the challenges inherent in it.

(U//FOUO) As we have all heard many times during the 9/11 Commission hearings, the FBI has traditionally been and continues to be very good at investigating incidents after they have occurred. However, their current challenge in the post-9/11 world is to improve their ability to perform predictive and preventative analysis. They have made great strides toward this end by devoting more resources to hiring and retaining qualified analysts and improving information exchange with Intelligence Community partners. But, at least in my experience, there is more that can be done. I think this point is illustrated well in the following example:

(C) I had been at WFO for about a month when I met an agent who had just returned from a 90-day tour in Iraq where he was responsible for investigating attacks on coalition forces. He began to list the names of several detainees he had interviewed during the course of his duties, and explained that he often had little or no background information about these individuals before going to speak to them. He was sometimes even forced to recommend that they be released because he had no means of vetting their story. I remembered one of the names from my own tour in Iraq one year earlier, and decided to do a brief search of NSA databases and Intelink resources. I discovered that the individual I remembered was indeed the same person who had been interviewed by the FBI.

(C) NSA's counterterrorism product line had issued dozens of product reports about him and his extremist associates during the combat operations phase of OIF. All of these reports were addressed to both FBI HQ and FBI WFO, but this valuable information never made it to the case agent who was cleared to see it and could actually act on it. This experience was eye-opening for me and further underscored the importance of being able to freely share information between agencies. 9/11 has forced policy changes that are helping to make that happen at an unprecedented rate. But it seems to me that education and infrastructure still remain as the two main roadblocks to this effort. I will attempt to briefly address each of these in a little more detail in part 2 of this article.

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